

Breaking the Cycle of Violence

Final Project Evaluation Report

October 2020



1. Introduction

This report is the final external evaluation report on the project, Breaking the Cycle of Violence, developed and implemented by Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence within the Ministry of Justice, Equality and Governance in Malta. The project was co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union (2014-2020). The project was implemented from 2018-2020. (While the responsible unit and Ministry changed from the time of submitting the proposal to the end of the project, the key personnel remained constant).

An external, formative evaluation was identified as a feature of the project and was included from the outset of the project. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators were identified to assess the project and contribute to learning from the activities. The evaluation design included provision of quarterly interviews and discussions of learning with project partners and reports of progress in the first year; annual progress reports highlighting possible modifications, emerging developments and learning for the work of the partners, and annual progress report in second year and this final evaluation report developed after final interviews with project partners.

The key element throughout the evaluation has been a focus on understanding the impact of the project at individual, organisational, institutional and societal levels with a view to contributing to further developments with the national strategy and action plan on GBV and DV as implemented by Commission on Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence(CDV).

The first section of this final evaluation report documents the project rationale, aims, objectives, beneficiaries, project design, and expected outputs and outcomes. The second section identifies the key learning and reflections from the project as identified by the partners, and the implications for future work in the area of GBV and DV in Malta.

2. Background to the project and rationale

The project was designed to address a key element of the Istanbul Convention – awareness raising among victims and potential victims of intimate partner violence/domestic and gender-based violence.

The second key element of the project was to undertake research with the target groups about ‘what works’ in terms of increasing the knowledge about abuse, the skills to address abusive situations and the changes to behaviour needed to reduce the incidence of DSGBV against women and girls.

The project was designed based on the data and research undertaken on and in Malta, indicating the need for awareness raising, and changes in skills and behaviours.

In addition, groups of people are more vulnerable to abuse in general in intimate and domestic relationships. Working with civil society organisations which specialise in supports for migrant women, women with disabilities, LGBTI women as well as women who have already experienced abuse in their intimate relationships was included in the project design in order to increase the knowledge about the specific needs of these groups, and to provide training resources for future replication of the training undertaken.

The project addressed 5 identified needs;

- a) Data collection, research, analysis and dissemination of results of the impact of information sessions with the target groups, the impact of training session with children and young people, the impact of tools to bring about behavioural change and the impact of public campaigns on the perceptions of violence.
- b) Empowerment of victims of violence with life skills to avoid returning to an abusive situation.
- c) Awareness raising amongst women from vulnerable groups, children and youth with the aim to prevent abuse
- d) Identifications of negative attitudes and behaviours to change and break the cycle of violence
- e) Engagement of more men and boys in the fight against VAW.

3. Project aims and Objectives

The overall aim of the project was to identify the behaviours and attitudes towards violence in targeted groups, and the need to break the cycle of violence by changing behaviours contributing to VAW gender stereotypes and inequalities and promote gender equality.

Specific objectives were:

- a. To identify the behaviours and attitudes of victims experiencing violence against women, which impede them from breaking free from the cycle of violence.
- b. To raise awareness among vulnerable groups of women with a focus on women with disabilities, migrant women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women; and for them to be informed about support services and protection measures.
- c. To raise awareness among children and young people, and actively engage boys and men in the fight against VAW.
- d. To raise awareness and encourage victims, potential victims and witnesses to report VAW and to seek help.
- e. To develop and implement a set of mentoring workshops for victims who have experienced VAW to instigate the behavioural changes required to break the cycle of violence.
- f. To develop and implement an educational programme for children and young adults on prevention of VAW and spread a clear message of zero tolerance to VAW.

4. Project Design and activities

The project was designed around 6 main axes of activity. A core team from within HRID met with the project partners to plan and discuss the project activities and the implementation of the project.

The axis of activities was:

- 1) Research by Research Team from University of Malta with the project partners to design the Information sessions and the mentoring sessions.
- 2) Research from Research Team to inform the awareness raising campaign targeting the general population.
- 3) Research to measure the impact of the information sessions to each of the target groups and the educational programme for children and youth. This involved developing tools to identify baseline measurements, repeated then at end of the programmes and again 3 months after end of the programme. Relevant modifications were made for age cohorts, language and format of delivery of the questionnaires.
- 4) Mentoring workshops with victims of VAW in both the community and currently living in second stage housing.
- 5) The information session with the target groups.
- 6) The educational programme with the young people and the children.
- 7) The awareness raising campaign for the general public.

These activities were developed and implemented through a number of workstreams.

Overall Management and Coordination of the project was provided by the staff of HRID initially, with responsibility transferred to Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence (CDV) in Year 2 in agreement with the European Commission.

Workstream 0. Project Management and Co-ordination.

Liaison with the European Commission

Project employment contracts for Project Supervisor, Project Administrator, Target Group Co-Ordinator, Target Group Leaders, External Evaluator.

Tenders for provision of services in relation to events, publications etc.

Financial control.

Project reporting.

Workstream 1. Mentoring Workshops with survivors of domestic abuse.

Development and design of mentoring and information sessions.

Delivery of the sessions, allowing self-reflection and sharing of experiences

Support to participants in self-care, identifying personal needs and goals and strengthening independent living skills.

Celebration and acknowledgement of the work of the women.

Workstream 2. Research and Information Sessions.

Identification of attitudes towards VAW and behavioural change needs among the target groups.

Measurement of behavioural and attitudinal changes as a result of the information sessions training and educational programmes.



Increasing the understanding and knowledge of women at greater risk of abuse about their rights, the identification of signs and symptoms of abuse and awareness of support services in Malta.

Awareness raising among children and young adults on gender stereotypes and norms that may lead to gender inequality and VAW.

Increasing capacity of all participants to recognise gender norms and stereotypes, gender imbalance and signs of violence.

Engagement of boys and men in the promotion of gender equality and the combating of VAW.

Workstream 3. Research and Awareness Raising Campaign.

Awareness raising activities including launch of project, awareness raising campaign Be the Change Festival and final conference.

Public awareness campaign through various media.

Telephone research to members of general public to identify understanding of VAW and DV pre and post the information campaigns.

Raising awareness amongst professionals in human resources, public service and lawyers on how to address VAW in their work and how to support victims of violence.

5. Project Beneficiaries

The project was ambitious in the range and number of beneficiaries identified and targeted for the actions and activities. This included:

Expected beneficiaries	Actual beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survivors of domestic abuse – living in second stage housing and living in the community. (16 in total) ○ Women with disabilities (20) ○ Migrant women (10) ○ LGBTI women (14) ○ Lawyers/advocates (10) ○ Public Service Employees (100) ○ Human Resource directorate staff (15) ○ NGOs (20) ○ General public – potential victims, bystanders and witnesses (500) ○ Girl Guide and Scout Leaders (40) ○ Youth Ambassadors (40) ○ Children (400) who would be trained by the Guide and Scout Leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survivors of domestic abuse – living in second stage housing and living in the community. (12 in total) ○ Women with disabilities (17) ○ Migrant women (10) ○ LGBTI women (10) ○ Lawyers/advocates (11) ○ Public Service Employees (45 directly through training – others reached through awareness raising on Government Intranet portal. ○ Human Resource directorate staff (56) ○ NGOs (33) ○ General public – potential victims, bystanders and witnesses (500) ○ Girl Guide and Scout Leaders (22) ○ Youth Ambassadors (51) ○ Children (400) who would be trained by the Guide and Scout Leaders.

6. Expected Outputs

Given the ambitious range of beneficiaries, there was an equally ambitious set of outputs anticipated for the project.

Expected outputs	Actual outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Launch event. ○ Webpage hosted on government portal ○ Research Report ○ 3 Training packs available for replication. Guides/Scouts, Survivors of violence and for the target groups of women. ○ 16 Information sessions and workshops with survivors of VAW. ○ 32 hours of individual mentoring sessions with survivors of VAW ○ 45 hours of individual mentoring sessions with the participants from the target groups ○ 12 information sessions with target groups ○ 4 seminars with NGOs and participants from target groups ○ 2 leadership weekends for guides and scouts ○ 2 educational programmes delivered to 5-10 and 11+ year olds. ○ 1 Youth Ambassador weekend to develop Festival – Be the Change. ○ I general public awareness raising campaign in print and social media. ○ 1 Festival – Be the Change. ○ 5 information session with public entities – lawyers/hr and public services staff. ○ 1 final project conference. ○ 1 Project report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Launch event. ○ Webpage hosted on government portal ○ Research Report ○ 3 Training packs available for replication. Guides/Scouts, Survivors of violence and for the target groups of women. ○ 16 Information sessions and workshops with survivors of VAW. ○ 32 hours of individual mentoring sessions with survivors of VAW ○ 45 hours of individual mentoring sessions with the participants from the target groups ○ 12 information sessions with target groups ○ 4 seminars with NGOs and participants from target groups ○ 2 leadership weekends for guides and scouts ○ 2 educational programmes delivered to 5-10 and 11+ year olds. ○ 1 Youth Ambassador weekend to develop Festival – Be the Change. ○ I general public awareness raising campaign in print and social media. ○ 1 Festival – Be the Change. On-line due to Covid 19 ○ 5 information session with public entities – lawyers/hr and public services staff. ○ 1 final project conference. ○ 1 Project report.

The project clearly delivered on its outputs as measured by the deliverables, the numbers of people reached and the activities that took place. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the project management team the Be the Change Festival had to be re-scheduled, and the project overall was extended by 6 months so as to complete the activities within the safety requirements of the Covid 19 pandemic.

There were some implementation changes to some of the activities in order to take into account the needs of particular target groups: for example the design of the sessions with the survivors

of abuse; the Youth Ambassador training weekend was offered to Guides and Scout leaders rather than young people from other youth organisations; and the numbers of NGO represented at the seminars was reduced to take account of the level of overlap between the possible attendees.

In addition to delivery of the project actions, the project partners engaged in reflection and identification of impacts of their activities and learning for their organisations. Because the external evaluation was formative in nature, there has been an on-going documentation of the outputs and learning throughout the lifespan of the project. These reports are available from project co-ordination team. In this way, the learning is more embedded in the organisations, and there is the opportunity in Q4 of 2020 for them to contribute to the development of the next National Strategy for combatting GBV and DV in Malta.

7. Outcomes, learning and impact

Given the project design and intended beneficiaries we can identify impact at different levels from the project actions and activities.

1. *Level of individual* – We can see from the research that there have been changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in the different cohorts of target groups. While the percentage change varies from group to group, the impact of increased awareness, knowledge about and intention to action is clear. This also includes changes in awareness about gender stereotypes and the links to gender inequality and unequal power dynamics in relationship.

Other impacts of the project activities were the sense of empowerment and sense of achievement, with the women survivors of abuse. Participants also identified their sense of enhanced capacity to lead discussions on the issues and identified their own learning as leaders and/or facilitators and trainers.

2. *Level of organisations – project partners* – The project allowed for a degree of collaboration and networking between the project partners which has contributed to their own organisations' work. The relationship between Guides and Scouts has developed. There was an opportunity for the three partners – MGRM, MWAM and CRPD to work together on supporting their own learning and development on cooperation and greater understanding of the impacts of people from more than one specific group – e.g. migrant woman with disabilities or lesbian migrant, or etc. This opportunity could have had greater impact, but there is an openness to collaborate in future. The issue of intersectionality emerged strongly during the project – and is being followed through through inclusion in events and linking the agencies Support and APPOGG so that the different needs can be met in a co-ordinated manner.

Secondly, the NGO partners identified the need for further work on the issue of intimate partner and domestic abuse with their communities. It was acknowledged as very useful, if somewhat challenging, to acknowledge that abuse, violence and coercion can occur in the target communities. The next step is to broaden that discussion – and break the silence, and then the cycle of violence. The training packs developed provide an opportunity to replicate the actions, so that more people within the target communities can benefit from the actions of the project. This multiplier effect might need some

additional supports but all three identified the intention to include both the replication of the action and the collaboration and cooperation with other NGOs in their organisations' work programmes in 2021 and following years.

Issues related to language, physical accessibility, and trained staff in services provided by NGO's and state agencies are now recognised as barriers to access to services that need to be addressed.

3. *Level of institutions* – The impact on the human resources directorates and the public service entities that attended the information days is not known, but from the evaluation by those participants there is a clear indication that further work at the various institutional levels is needed. Thus, specific training could be devised to advance the changes with police, advocates, justice system personnel, medical personnel, employer's bodies, teachers and educational ministry system.

Similar to the need for collaboration and co-operation between different NGOs so as to address intersectionality and specific needs, the agencies working with victims and survivors of violence will need to develop pathways for multi-agency actions and plans for intervention. This is already emerging.

An important outcome from the project has been the realisation of the need of police and other services to take account of accessibility issues, so as not to perpetuate barriers. For Example, languages interpretation – including sign language, physical accessibility, cultural and equality appropriate approaches to acknowledging violence and abusive relations.

Due to its co-ordination and leading function the CDV is very well placed to advance the work with other institutions and include the recommendations from this project in the development of the next National Strategy. The impact of this project can be built on because of the excellent working relationships developed and the focus on learning, embedding and using the project as a source for the development of the next national strategy on DSGBV.

It was a consistent benefit to the project that the Project Co-Ordination was held by CDV in its second two years, so that the strategy implementation on combating VAW was the overall framework and context for the project. This allows for bringing forward the learning and the recommendations, thereby embedding the benefits of the project, and ensuring sustainability of the changes.

Some learning from this project for CDV in designing future projects is the need to have a mechanism to engage the project partners throughout the lifespan of the project; and to resource accessibility fully.

The Project Management demonstrated a high degree of resilience in the face of so many personnel changes throughout the timeframe and held the project with the project partners across some challenging political and public health challenges.

4. *Societal level* – The public information and awareness raising campaign did have some impact, and what is clear from the data is that campaigns do work. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the timing of such campaigns needs to be synchronised and coordinated with other campaign messages. Three different campaigns were operating

in Malta at much the same time, all on issues related to DSGBV, making it challenging to have deeper impact for any one set of messages. From the research report, a recommendation that future campaign work focus on attitudes to gender equality, the roles of women and men, and the autonomy of women are useful guides to future campaigns.

The work with the young people and with the children demonstrates how necessary it is to find the way to having more programmes in the education system that address gender stereotypes, bullying, bodily autonomy, and sexual relations. It is also necessary to have more work targeted at boys, young men and men so as to bring about the changes in behaviours and attitudes aimed at by the project. The recommendation from MGG to have their internationally validated programmes delivered in schools is a useful next step. Working with the young people and children will contribute to a society more based on the values of equality and human rights.

8. Reflections and recommendations for future work on DSGBV

Naturally, there were some challenges in the implementation of the project as planned. But the different project partners worked well to address these, and demonstrated high degrees of flexibility, creativity and resilience.

These challenges included: a very complicated research design which added to research fatigue; the numbers of participants in the target groups was very small making for challenges in statistical analysis; because of the specific needs of each of the target groups the treatments received were all different, adding multiple variables into the research design; there were three different Project Managers in the 2 year period and the project timeframe had to be extended into 2020 when all target actions were scheduled to be completed in 2019.

Nevertheless, the project partners worked diligently to overcome the challenges, and to reach the outputs and outcomes identified above. For future projects it will be worth noting the issues identified through these experiences.

Due to the nature of the call from European Commission, the project design overall had to encompass a very broad range of issues, and a more targeted programme might have yielded more impact for each of the different target groups.

But CDV and the community of NGOs and agencies operating in Malta are now very well placed to design the next strategy on combatting DSGBV because of the wealth of information gained through this project, and the other actions of the strategy.

Future work should also consider how project partners are fully supported to contribute throughout the timeframe of a project, and to have learning and reflection opportunities built into the design.

As has been mentioned, a benefit to this project was the national strategy on combating DSGBV, which provided a framework for the actions. A review of the strategy and its progress on its identified outcomes will be useful in designing the next strategy, taking the learning from all the separate actions into account, including the learning from this project.

9. Conclusion

Breaking the Cycle of Violence was a well implemented project, encompassing a very broad range of beneficiaries and activities. The key element of the research into the impact of these actions on knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in relation to DSGBV demonstrates the positive impact of the actions towards positive changes in all three.

The Project Management Team managed a number of challenges throughout the timeframe of the project and brought it to a successful conclusion.

There is a deal of learning from the project, which is being taken forward in NGOs, agencies and in the CDV for the national level. There was identifiable impact of the project on individuals, organisations, institutions and society.

Given the role of CDV in overseeing this project and in designing the national strategies to combat violence and abuse, the learning and impact of this project can be built on, further embedded and taken to next steps to sustain the outcomes from the project.

